

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for managing a value chain, comprising:

a planning application operable to receive planning data from a plurality of entities included in a value chain and to automatically generate a plan according to the planning data, at least two of the entities not directly communicating planning data to one another; and

a manager application operable to:

receive the plan and automatically identify one or more exceptions in the plan;

communicate planning data relating to the exceptions to one or more of the entities;

receive instructions from one or more of the entities regarding how the exceptions are to resolved; and

automatically modify the planning data in response to the instructions.

2. The system of Claim 1, wherein:

the planning application is further operable to automatically generate an updated plan according to the planning data modified by the manager application; and

the manager application is further operable to communicate the updated plan to the entities in the value chain.

3. The system of Claim 1, wherein the manager application is further operable to:

receive updated planning data from one or more of the entities; and

automatically identify potential exceptions that may be caused by the updated planning data without receiving an updated plan from the planning application.

4. The system of Claim 1, wherein the manager application is further operable to:

automatically communicate a notification regarding the existence of an exception to one or more of the entities;

5 receive a request for information about the exception from one or more of the entities in response to the notification;

automatically communicate planning data relating to the exception to one or more of the entities in response to receiving the request.

10 5. The system of Claim 1, wherein the manager application is further operable to control access to the planning information based on a permissibility framework.

15 6. The system of Claim 1, wherein the planning application comprises a supply chain planning engine, the plurality of entities comprise enterprises, and the plan comprises a supply chain plan for at least a portion of a supply chain including the enterprises.

20 7. The system of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the exceptions comprises an excess or lack of supply of an item.

25 8. The system of Claim 1, wherein the planning data comprises data selected from the group consisting of demand data, supply data, inventory data, and capacity data.

9. The system of Claim 1, wherein the planning application is further operable to:

receive set-up information from one or more of the entities, the set-up information including characteristics of the value chain; and

30 automatically generate the plan according to the planning data and the set-up information.

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10. The system of Claim 1, further comprising an electronic marketplace that supports the planning application and the manager application.

11. The system of Claim 10, wherein the marketplace comprises a web  
5 server operable to communicate the planning data relating to the exceptions to one or more entities in the value chain.

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12. A method for managing a value chain, comprising:  
receiving planning data from a plurality of entities included in a value chain, at  
least two of the entities not directly communicating planning data to one another;  
automatically generating a plan according to the planning data;  
5 automatically identifying one or more exceptions in the plan;  
communicating planning data relating to the exceptions to one or more of the  
entities;  
receiving instructions from one or more of the entities regarding how the  
exceptions are to resolved; and  
10 automatically modifying the planning data in response to the instructions.

13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:  
automatically generating an updated plan according to the modified planning  
data; and  
15 communicating the updated plan to the entities in the value chain.

14. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:  
receiving updated planning data from one or more of the entities; and  
automatically identifying potential exceptions that may be caused by the  
20 updated planning data without updating the plan according to the updated planning  
data.

15. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:

automatically communicating a notification regarding the existence of an exception to one or more of the entities;

receiving a request for information about the exception from one or more of the entities in response to the notification;

automatically communicating planning data relating to the exception to one or more of the entities in response to receiving the request.

16. The method of Claim 12, further comprising controlling access to the planning information based on a permissibility framework.

17. The method of Claim 12, wherein the plurality of entities comprise enterprises and the plan comprises a supply chain plan for at least a portion of a supply chain including the enterprises.

18. The method of Claim 12, wherein at least one of the exceptions comprises an excess or lack of supply of an item.

19. The method of Claim 12, wherein the planning data comprises data selected from the group consisting of demand data, supply data, inventory data, and capacity data.

20. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:

receiving set-up information from one or more of the entities, the set-up information including characteristics of the value chain; and

automatically generating the plan according to the planning data and the set-up information.

21. Software for managing a value chain, the software embodied in a computer-readable medium and operable, when executed, to:

receive planning data from a plurality of entities included in a value chain, at least two of the entities not directly communicating planning data to one another;

5 automatically generate a plan according to the planning data;

automatically identify one or more exceptions in the plan;

communicate planning data relating to the exceptions to one or more of the entities;

10 receive instructions from one or more of the entities regarding how the exceptions are to resolved; and

automatically modify the planning data in response to the instructions.

22. The software of Claim 21, further operable to:

15 automatically generate an updated plan according to the modified planning data; and

communicate the updated plan to the entities in the value chain.

23. The software of Claim 21, further operable to:

receive updated planning data from one or more of the entities; and

20 automatically identify potential exceptions that may be caused by the updated planning data without updating the plan according to the updated planning data.

24. The software of Claim 21, further operable to:

25 automatically communicate a notification regarding the existence of an exception to one or more of the entities;

receive a request for information about the exception from one or more of the entities in response to the notification;

30 automatically communicate planning data relating to the exception to one or more of the entities in response to receiving the request.

25. The software of Claim 21, further operable to control access to the planning information based on a permissibility framework.

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26. The software of Claim 21, wherein the plurality of entities comprise enterprises and the plan comprises a supply chain plan for at least a portion of a supply chain including the enterprises.

5 27. The software of Claim 21, wherein at least one of the exceptions comprises an excess or lack of supply of an item.

10 28. The software of Claim 21, wherein the planning data comprises data selected from the group consisting of demand data, supply data, inventory data, and capacity data.

15 29. The software of Claim 21, further operable to:  
receive set-up information from one or more of the entities, the set-up information including characteristics of the value chain; and  
automatically generate the plan according to the planning data and the set-up information.

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30. A system for managing a value chain, comprising:

means for receiving planning data from a plurality of entities included in a value chain, at least two of the entities not directly communicating planning data to one another;

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means for automatically generating a plan according to the planning data;

means for automatically identifying one or more exceptions in the plan;

means for communicating planning data relating to the exceptions to one or more of the entities;

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means for receiving instructions from one or more of the entities regarding how the exceptions are to resolved; and

means for automatically modifying the planning data in response to the instructions.

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31. A system for managing a value chain, comprising:

a planning application operable to:

receive planning data from a plurality of entities included in a value chain, at least two of the entities not directly communicating planning data to one another;

receive set-up information from one or more of the entities, the set-up information including characteristics of the value chain; and

automatically generate a plan according to the planning data; and

a manager application operable to:

receive the plan and automatically identify one or more exceptions in the plan;

automatically communicate a notification regarding the existence of an exception to one or more of the entities;

receive a request for information about the exception from one or more of the entities in response to the notification;

automatically communicate planning data relating to the exception to one or more of the entities in response to receiving the request, the manager application controlling access to the planning information based on a permissibility framework;

receive instructions from one or more of the entities regarding how the exceptions are to be resolved; and

automatically modify the planning data in response to the instructions.

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32. A method for managing a value chain, comprising:  
receiving planning data from a plurality of entities included in a value chain, at  
least two of the entities not directly communicating planning data to one another;  
receiving set-up information from one or more of the entities, the set-up  
5 information including characteristics of the value chain;  
automatically generating a plan according to the planning data;  
receiving the plan and automatically identifying one or more exceptions in the  
plan;  
automatically communicating a notification regarding the existence of an  
10 exception to one or more of the entities;  
receiving a request for information about the exception from one or more of  
the entities in response to the notification;  
automatically communicating planning data relating to the exception to one or  
more of the entities in response to receiving the request, access to the planning  
15 information being based on a permissibility framework;  
receiving instructions from one or more of the entities regarding how the  
exceptions are to resolved; and  
automatically modifying the planning data in response to the instructions.

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33. Software for managing a value chain, the software embodied in a computer-readable medium and operable, when executed, to:

receive planning data from a plurality of entities included in a value chain, at least two of the entities not directly communicating planning data to one another;

5 receive set-up information from one or more of the entities, the set-up information including characteristics of the value chain;

automatically generate a plan according to the planning data;

receive the plan and automatically identify one or more exceptions in the plan;

10 automatically communicate a notification regarding the existence of an exception to one or more of the entities;

receive a request for information about the exception from one or more of the entities in response to the notification;

15 automatically communicate planning data relating to the exception to one or more of the entities in response to receiving the request, the manager application controlling access to the planning information based on a permissibility framework;

receive instructions from one or more of the entities regarding how the exceptions are to resolved; and

automatically modify the planning data in response to the instructions.

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